GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:6991
ANSWERED ON:11.05.2000
FUNCTIONING OF GRAM SABHA
SHANKERSINH VAGHELA;SUKDEO PASWAN

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have observed the year 1999-2000 as the Gram Sabha year; and

(b) if so, the number of schemes introduced during the above period?

Answer

MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

(SHRI SUNDAR LAL PATWA)

(a)&(b): Yes, Sir. While no scheme was introduced in connection with the Year, 1999-2000 as the Year of the Gram Sabha, several initiatives were taken by the Central Government during this period. The State Governments/Union Territories were advised to ensure that the Gram Sabha should meet at least once every Quarter, preferably on 26th January - Republic Day, Ist May - Labour Day, 15th August - Independence Day and 2nd October - Gandhi Jayanti. All the Chairpersons of the Gram Panchayatswere urged to make concerted effort to strengthen and empower the Gram Sabhas. The Year of the Gram Sabha was publicised through the All India Radio and Television and through advertisements in National News-papers. The Chief Ministers/Administrators were also requested to initiate the measures :-

(i) to vest in the Gram Sabha, powers on the lines envisaged in the Provisions of Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996;

(ii) to make a mandatory provision in the Panchayati Raj Act for holding Gram Sabha meetings throughout the country on the same predetermined dates;

(iii) to make a mandatory provision in the Panchayati Raj Act specifying quorum for Gram Sabha meetings;

(iv) to make members of the Gram Sabha aware of their powers and responsibilities to ensure mass participation, particularly of the SCs, STs and Women;

(v) to lay down procedures for the Gram Sabha to effectively carry out social audit of beneficiary-oriented development programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development.

Steps were taken to the effect that selection of beneficiaries under the Indira Awaas Yojana, the Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana and the Swarnjayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana is done in the Gram Sabha meetings. The Gram Sabha was also authorised to approve works to be undertaken under the JGSY. A National level Workshop on functioning of the Gram Sabha was organised by the National Institute of Rural Development, Hyderabad. This workshoprecommended various ways and means for strengthening the Gram Sabhas.